Drugs for Alzheimer's Disease

Key Questions and Inclusion Criteria

Update #1

Key Questions

1. How do the included drugs or drug combinations (i.e., acetylcholinesterase inhibitor plus memantine) compare in their effectiveness for stabilizing symptoms and treating behavioral disturbances in patients with Alzheimer's Disease?

2. How do these drugs or drug combinations compare in their time to effect and in the time required to assess the clinical response?

3. What are the comparative incidence and severity of complications of these drugs or drug combinations?

4. Do the included drugs or drug combinations differ in effectiveness or adverse events in the following subgroups:
   - different racial groups, genders, or age groups?
   - patients with Parkinsonian features or vascular dementia?
   - patients taking other commonly prescribed drugs?

Inclusion Criteria

Population

- Specific subpopulations will include patients
  - with mild (early-stage) Alzheimer's Disease
  - with moderate to severe (mid- to late-stage) Alzheimer's Disease
- Patients living at home or in skilled nursing facilities

Interventions

Generic Name		**Trade Name**
Acetylcholinesterase Inhibitors	Donepezil hydrochloride	Aricept
	Rivastigmine tartrate	Exelon
	Galantamine	Razadyne
	Galantamine ER	Razadyne ER
	Tacrine	Cognex
NMDA Receptor Antagonists	Memantine	Namenda

Effectiveness outcomes

- Mortality
- Stabilizing or slowing the rate of decline in:
  - Day-to-day function (e.g., activities of daily living, instrumental activities of daily living, level of care changes)
  - Cognition
  - Quality of life

- Reducing behavioral symptoms (e.g., aggression, agitation, psychosis, mood disorders)
- Decreasing caregiver burden
- Reducing hospitalizations or nursing home placement

Safety outcomes

- Overall adverse effects
- Withdrawals due to adverse effects
- Serious adverse events reported
- Adverse events due to discontinuation (temporary or permanent)
- Specific adverse events (e.g., hepatotoxicity, weight loss, gastrointestinal symptoms, other specific adverse events)

Study designs

- For effectiveness, controlled clinical trials and good-quality systematic reviews.
- For safety, in addition to controlled clinical trials, observational studies will be included.